Automation of petrol pumps

2441. DR. V. MAITREYAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has drawn up a unique well planned programme to automate the various petrol pumps across the country by the Oil Marketing Companies;

(b) if so, the status of this automation;

(c) the total plan outlay for this programme;

(d) wheher it is also a fact that plan is running behind schedule;

(e) the reasons for this delay and by when the completion of this automation will take place; and

(f) the main benefits to the common customers due to this automation process?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. In order to monitor the activities at Retail Outlets (ROs) by adopting the latest technological improvements, Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have been advised to expeditiously complete the Automation of ROs selling more than 200 KL per month.

As on 31.03.2008, OMCs have completed approx 70% automation of the ROs selling more than 200 KL per month.

(c) Total plan outlay for this programme of OMCs is 682.71 Crores.

(d) and (e) BPCL has completed the automation programme as per their target HPCL and IOCL have not completed the automation of all ROs as per schedule, *i.e.* 31.03.2008. They are expecting to complete the automation of balance ROs by September, 2008. OMCs have reported that the following are the factors affecting the pace of automation:

(i) The retail automation is a niche segment and globally only limited vendors are available to carry out system integration for retail automation.

(ii) Wide geographical spread of the ROs to be automated across the country creating logistics strain;

(iii) High import content requirement both in hardware as well as software.

(f) The automation system being provided at retail outlets is expected to facilitate better monitoring of the stocks, receipts and sales from the automated retail outlets, apart from other features like computerized billing etc. These transactions are constantly recorded by the system and are automatically transferred to OMCs Head Office on daily basis. The system is expected to ensure efficient stock reconciliation on day-to-day basis thereby reducing the chances of unintended product being unloaded in the tanks at these retail outlets.

Crude Oil Import Bill

2442. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India's crude oil import bill during 2007-08 has gone up in comparison to the last two years;